DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 033 PS 024 756

AUTHOR Smith, Susan L.
TITLE Improving a Military Before and After School Program for Kindergarten Children through Staff Training.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 81p.; Master's Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE. MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *After School Programs; Behavior Problems; Child Caregivers; Child Development; Child Health; Class Activities; Classroom Environment; Cognitive Development; Creativity; Discipline; Educational Quality; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Inservice Education; Job Skills; Job Training; Nutrition; Parent Participation; Physical Development; Program Evaluation; Program Improvement; Reflective Teaching; Safety; *School Age Day Care; Self Esteem; Social Development; *Staff Development
IDENTIFIERS *Before School Programs; Caregiver Training; *Developmentally Appropriate Programs

ABSTRACT

Concerns about the quality of a before- and after-school program on an overseas military installation arose due to low staff morale, caregivers' lack of training and experience, and child behavior problems. This practicum project devised and implemented a 10-week training program to increase staff knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and to provide them with guided practice in evaluation of program components. Caregivers were assisted, through reflective teaching and peer advising, in using their new knowledge to alter the children's activity environment. The training module topics were: (1) keeping children safe; (2) promoting good health and nutrition; (3) creating and using an environment for learning; (4) promoting physical development; (5) promoting cognitive development; (6) promoting communication; (7) promoting creativity; (8) building children's self-esteem; (9) promoting social development; (10) providing positive guidance; (11) working with families; (12) being an effective manager; and (13) maintaining a commitment to professionalism. Resources were also collected to assist staff in future planning. Evaluation results indicated that staff gained knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and were able to implement changes to the daily schedule, the environment, and the activities. These adaptations resulted in children engaging in more appropriate activities throughout the program day, and an 80 percent decline in the number of child behavior problems. (Eleven appendices include a list of additional training materials and sample training activities. Contains 24 references.) (KDFB)

PS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 401 033

IMPROVING A MILITARY BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN THROUGH STAFF TRAINING

Susan L. Smith
Cohort # 69

A Practicum Report Presented to the Master's Degree Program
in Life Span Care and Administration
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science

Nova Southeastern University

1996

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Susan L. Smith
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

PS 024756

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

February 20, 1996

Susan L. Smith

Abstract

Improving A Military Before and After School Program for Kindergarten Children Through Staff Training. Smith, Susan L., 1996: Nova Southeastern University, Master's Program in Life Span Care and Administration. Descriptors: Before and After School Programs/ School Age Care/ Child Care/ Day Care/ Day Care Provider Training/ Teacher Education/ In Service Training/ Adult Learning

Parents of a Before and After School program had expressed concerns for the quality of the program. Staff members were experiencing low job satisfaction and frustration. Children were bored and acting out in an inappropriate manner. Due to limited availability of experienced or trained personnel, staff members employed to conduct a Before and After School Program on an overseas military installation had no previous experience or knowledge of Before and After school programs.

The author implemented a ten week training program designed to increase staff knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and provide staff members with guided practice of evaluation of program components. Staff members were assisted in using knowledge to alter the children's activity environment. Program success hinged on providing staff members practice of practical application and reflection utilizing peer advising. Staff members were empowered to take greater responsibility for the program and become problem solvers in a supportive environment.

Staff members gained knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices. As a result of knowledge, staff implemented changes to daily schedule, environment and activities available

to children. Changes resulted in an 80% decrease in the number of behavior problems from before the training was implemented. Staff members were empowered to plan activities and adapt program in an effective manner. Adaptations resulted in children engaging in more appropriate activities throughout the program day. A collection of resources was established to assist staff members in future planning.

Table of Contents

Chapter		Page
I.	**Introduction and Background**	
	The setting in which the problem occurs	4
	Author's role in the setting	8
II.	**The Problem**	
	Problem Statement	10
	Documentation of Problem	11
	Analysis of the problem	13
III.	**Goals and Objectives**	19
IV.	**Solution Strategy**	
	Review of existing programs, models and approaches	21
	Selected Strategy	27
V.	**Stategy Employed**	
	Action Taken	33
	Review of Practicum Goals and Achievements	43
VI.	**Conclusions, Recommendations, Future Plans**	
	Conclusions	45
	Recommendations	46
	Future Plans	48

Reference List 49

Appendices

A	Comparison Chart of Developmental Stages Applied to Learning	51
B	Sample: Observation Record of Children's Behavior	54
C	Sample: Staff Questionnaire	57
D	Department of the Navy Caregiver Module Topics	60
E	Ten Week Calendar for Implementation	62
F	Sample: Activity Evaluation/Reflection Worksheet	66
G	Sample: Curriculum Web	68
H	Word Association Activity Results	70
I	Reference List of Training Materials	72
J	Initial Program Schedule	74
K	Revised Schedule	76

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Background

The Setting in Which the Problem Occurs

The problem addressed in this practicum project takes place in a Before and After School Program. The program is conducted in the Youth Center on a military installation located overseas. The Youth Center conducts programs of both a recreational and care nature for school age children of the community. The Youth Center operates as part of the Recreation Division of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Department of the installation. Children eligible for participation in the Youth Center Programs range in age from kindergarten to sixth grade. The Before and After School Program is designed to provide supervision and care for children attending elementary school when school is not is session. This includes children who attend either the morning or afternoon session of the two and one half hour kindergarten program. The kindergarten care component of the program is the focus of this practicum project.

The installation is located in a remote are of Japan and as such is isolated from other U. S. military bases in the region. The total population of the base is approximately 4,500. This population is composed of military accompanied by families on three year assignments, military members unaccompanied by families on six month or one year assignments and Department of Defense civilian employees and family members. Military and civilian workers perform not only duties related directly to the military mission but duties required in providing familiar and necessary support services to the community as well. Services include places to shop, dine, post

and receive mail, attend to medical and dental care needs or spend recreational or leisure time. The base in this regard is comparable to a small town in the United States.

Child care services for children ages five to twelve years of age are available through the Family Child Care providers certified by the command, private in-home nannies, or the Youth Center program. There are no other structured child care alternatives available to the parents assigned to the installation. Services had previously been available out in town in Japanese centers. Recently, the local community has had to restrict us of the Japanese centers to American children in order to accommodate the child care need in the Japanese community.

Child care services are necessary to enable those military and civilian members with children to perform the duties they are assigned in maintaining the installation's continued readiness in successfully performing the assigned military mission. Available child care services also contribute to the overall quality of life for community members. Child care services provide the opportunity for parents to attend a variety of activities including attending classes conducted on base in Japanese culture and language, Parenting, Life skills, Employment and Job Search and even college level courses. Care services also assist parents in providing the adult time necessary to complete the variety of errands required in day to day living which children are properly supervised. Child care support can be of utmost importance when the military member is deployed away from the installation.

The Youth Center conducts the supervised Before and After school program in addition to providing recreational activities to other school age children. In order to operate both program components simultaneously during the week, the Center has one room which is exclusively for the Before and After school program and a large multi-purpose room for the recreation program.

The multi-purpose rooms contains video games, pool table, ping pong table and pinball games for use by the children participating in the recreational program. Minimal supervision is provided to the children in this program. The Before and After school program is now in it's third year of operation at the Youth Center. This program provides children the opportunity to engage in recreational activities and socialize with peers under consistent and continual supervision. The majority of the children in the Before and After school program are ages five to seven. Children eight and older are more likely to participate in the other recreational opportunities which provide only a generalized oversight of the children. Children in the recreation program may sign themselves in and out at any time. The children in the supervised program are escorted to and from school by Youth Center staff and can only be signed out by individuals designated by the parent or guardian. The Youth Center is currently revising and initiating quality improvements of the program under the direction of the new Youth Services Director. The new Director had been on the installation for approximately four months at the inception of the practicum project.

Parents begin dropping children off at the Before and After school program when the program opens at 6:30. Children are provided the opportunity to eat breakfast and socialize before departing for school at 8:00. As a result of the morning and afternoon sessions of kindergarten, the program day has two components. From 8:00 until 2:30, the program meets the needs of children attending kindergarten, ages five and six. The program time before 8:00 and after 2:30 must meet the needs of the five and six year old as well as the other older children ages seven to nine.

At 8:00, children in the morning session of kindergarten and children in the first grade or above are walked to school by staff members. Currently there are six children who attend kindergarten in the afternoon session who remain in the center while the other children attend the morning session of kindergarten. At 10:30, the children who have attended morning kindergarten return to the center for the remainder of the program day. On a regular school day, there are typically 32 children in the program during the time frame from 10:30 until 12:00. During the afternoon session of kindergarten, 26 children remain in the program while the other children attend the afternoon session of kindergarten. The older school age children join the program again when school closes at 2:30. The Before and After school program day ends at 5:00.

The current building housing the program was constructed in 1990 to expand the quality and availability of youth services. The Youth Center is operated under regulations established by the local base commander. As a military facility, the centers is subject to a variety of local and higher headquarters' inspections annually and monthly. The center currently employs four full and part time staff member to work exclusively with the Before and After school program. The center must draw employees from a limited employee pool. The program is currently staffed by family members of personnel assigned to the installation, active duty military and two civilian government service employees. All of the current center employees have worked in the Youth Center less than one year. The staff members of the Before and After school program have not received any formal training to work with children. Additionally, none of the staff members have had experience with other School Age Care programs.

Authors Role in the Setting

The writer of this practicum report has worked in the field of Early Childhood for the past five years. The author has worked with military child development centers in the capacity of Training and Curriculum Specialist, Center Manager and Child Development Program Administrator. The author has had training and experience evaluating program environments with a variety of instruments including the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms, et al, 1987) and Assessment Profile (Abbott-Shim, et at, 1987). As a Training Specialist with a Navy Child Development Center, experience was gained in providing training workshops, establishing individual training goals with staff, establishing yearly training programs and training staff members in the Department of the Navy Caregiver Modules. The writer has provided training in a variety of settings with caregivers of various levels of experience and settings including center and home based care settings. Oversight of the Center and Family Child Care training programs was also a major part of the experience gained as the Child Development Program Administrator. As the Program Administrator, the writer has exercised the ability to problem solve as illustrated by success in elevating the level of compliance to Department of Defense (DOD) standards of early childhood program under the authors cognizance over a two year period. The increase in compliance was directly related to an increase in the quality of care provided and the receipt of DOD certification. The writer was also successful in increasing the capacity of programs offered to the community served at a reduced cost to the government.

The writer has expanded knowledge of training and quality programs through conferences and training programs sponsored by the Department of Defense, Department of the Navy and

Marine Corps Headquarters' personnel. In addition, the writer has been furthering education through the pursuit of a Master's Degree with Nova Southeastern University. For the duration of the practicum, the writer will be the Trainer for the Before and After school program. In this capacity, the writer is responsible for identifying training needs, coordinating and conducting appropriate training for the staff.

Chapter Two

The Problem

Problem Statement

The training provided to staff members is ineffective in preparing staff members, who have limited knowledge and experience working directly with groups of children, in planning and conducting developmentally appropriate activities in an appropriate environment necessary to provide quality child care services (Bredecamp, 1987; Korelak, et al, 1993). The environment prior to the inception of the practicum was set up with furniture and materials exclusively placed against the walls. This set up created a large open area for children to run and chase each other. Activity areas had brightly labeled displays however there was a lack of variety of activities in the few interest centers available to the children. Activity centers were not in separate or defined space. Children engaged in activities where often distracted or interrupted by other children. Several interest areas were combined into one physical space. Tables available for children to use were all of adult size and located close together in one area of the room. The art area focused primarily on coloring pictures duplicated from coloring books. All children were required to participate in the structured art activity conducted as a large group. Dramatic play was limited to a kitchen area. Music, if used, was for background rather than an activity. Children's boredom with materials resulted in behavior problems. Staff members expressed frustration with dealing with the children and their job.

The program should have an environment which is designed and organized to promote positive behaviors as much as possible. A greater variety of activities should be planned and provided to engage and maintain children's interest.

Documentation

The Before and After School program is conducted only during the school year. This year's program began the last week of August. During the first weeks of the program, the Director began to identify concerns for the program. Children appeared bored with the limited activities and materials from past years of the program. There was an unacceptable level of occurrence of behavior problems. The Director had also experienced an increase in concerns from parents questioning the appropriateness of the environment and activities provided.

The Assessment Profile tool (Abbott-Shim, et al, 1987) for School Age care program was used to establish a base line status of the program. Areas of concerns identified by their ratings include the environment, variety of activities and staff/child interactions. Materials and supply requirements were identified to effect program improvements. Within the first week of the current program year, supplies were beginning to be gathered from other base agencies to be incorporated into the program. Additional supplies were ordered. Several learning and interest center areas were beginning to be created for use by the children. Two of the new additions include the introduction of a unit block area and kitchen area. The new materials had provided an increase in activities for children, however, it was identified that staff members did not have the knowledge or experience to put the materials to their full benefit or to develop the interest

further. Art activities were limited to work with crayons and duplicated worksheets and pictures. There was a lack of activities in the areas of music, dramatic play and field trips.

The center has historically experienced a high staff turn over coupled with a limited employee pool for refilling vacant positions. There is often a gap of three to five weeks or more from the time one employee leaves until a suitable replacement can be found. As staff members leave, they are generally replaced with inexperienced staff members. The employee pool from which to select prospective staff members is limited to the family members of military or civilian workers assigned to the base. Therefore, the employee pool is not always composed of personnel with training and experience. Two of the program staff positions were vacant until two weeks before the implementation phase of the practicum. Of the care providers currently on staff, 100% have less than one year experience in child care. None of the program staff members directly involved with children has experience gained by working in a similar child care program.

The program has experienced a rapid growth in the number of families opting to enroll their children in the more supervised program. The first year of the program, 18 children were enrolled. The current enrollment totals over 30 children daily. Many of the children are on an hourly status and attend the program only a few hours or days each week as care is needed. As the military personnel assigned to the installation rotate in and out each year, programs must adapt to the change in population. For example in 1992, there were more kindergarten children requiring care than had previously been required. Programs had to make appropriate adjustments to accommodate these children. The following year, the population of kindergarten children dropped significantly programs once again had to adapt to the change in population. Currently

there is once again an increase in the number of children in both the kindergarten and younger school age children, ages six and seven accessing the program. There are only a few children over seven in the program at present.

Analysis

There are a variety of factors contributing to the ability of staff members to establish and maintain an appropriate environment and conduct appropriate activities for the Before and After School Program. As stated in the previous paragraphs, the Director of this program is new to the position and thus brings many new expectation for the program. Additionally, many of the parents with children enrolled in these programs have expectations based on experience with Before and After school programs conducted at other bases or schools in other areas where they have been assigned. The quality of Before and After School programs has been highlighted on many military installation over the past five years due to the increase in need of programs for school age children.

Many of the parents with children enrolled in the program previously had their children enrolled in the Early Childhood Programs offered by military Child Development Services (CDS) on the installation or perhaps at their last duty station. The base CDS by regulation provides a developmentally appropriate environment for children. Unlike CDS, the Youth Center does not employ a full time Training and Curriculum Specialist to provide training or assistance with the development and implementation of activities or plan environments. Generalized training for Youth Center employees is conducted through the MWR training

division. This training has been limited to general personnel issues which pertain to all employees of MWR including those working in Retail areas, Food and Hospitality or other divisions of the Recreation Branch.

Research on the effect of teacher training has concluded teacher with training related to educating young children engage in more social skills training with the children in their classrooms and had children in their classrooms who were more cooperative and had higher attention spans than the children who were in classrooms with teacher's with less education (Cassidy, et al, 1995). Given the general training provided staff members, this research provided relevance to the existence of the problem of the practicum statement.

In reviewing the training program, it is important to further explore and examine it's effectiveness. Insight can be provided by a series of questions (Darling-Hammond, et al, 1995). Three of the seven questions provided by Darling-Hammond in this training program would have to be answered negatively. Is the training generic or does it contain meaningful content? Does training put teacher in the role of learner or does it support the teacher as expert? And finally, the question, does the training provide for problem solving or memorization of facts? The current training program is generic, does not support the teacher/caregiver in the role of the learner and most importantly, does not provide opportunities for problem solving. Current objectives in education place emphasis on children experiencing and practicing problem solving in all areas of learning including the development of social skills. Therefore it must be encouraged that teachers/caregivers themselves are problem solvers.

The ability to evaluate situations is supported by many researchers, theorist and professionals with regards to successful learning theory. In deed, it is the reflection of one's

experiences not just the experience itself which aids the construction of knowledge (Carter, et al. 1994). The importance of reflection in the role of teacher is also illustrated in John Dewey's question "do you have ten years of experience or ten years of the same experience?" when responding to a teacher who had stated he had ten years of teaching experience. (Sprinthall, 1987). Glascott(1994) and Katz (1987) both qualify professional experience with regards to the ability to analyze a situation to select the appropriate action.

Training programs for teachers and caregivers must also acknowledge several facts about adult learners. Adults bring more life experiences to learning. (Cassidy, et al. 1995) As Carter and Curtis state, adults bring with them a body of ideas to unlearn as well as learn. This is especially true as it relates to teacher/caregiver education. Adults bring with them their experiences as children being taught and many experiences derived from working in various settings with children, often times even their own children. Adult learners differ from children in one profound way, they bring much more highly developed set of beliefs about what is and is not appropriate in a given situation. The current training of staff members does not address these issues but may in fact rely on adults previous beliefs and experiences as learners.

Adults, like children, do not learn things all at once, but develop new skills and habits over time appropriating them gradually through rehearsal and adapting. (Tally, 1995) The high turn over rate experienced in the Before and After school program is a contributing factor in the quality of programs. The high turn over is due in part to the nature of the employee pool. As prospective employees are family member of military or civilian workers, personnel have a specific tour of duty on the installation, typically three years. At the end of the tour, these workers will return to the continental United States. If a family member is hired at the

beginning of the assigned tour, they will be available for at most three years. Many family members chose not to start working directly when they arrive. Therefore, many employees obtain less than three year of experience. With the implementation of the military spouse preference program coupled with the Department of Defense Caregiver training program, the number of applicants with experience from other centers applying for jobs in military child care was expected to increase. This has not been the fact in overseas locations. The salary paid to caregivers in the Department of Defense is greater than the salary provided by many civilian centers. Therefore at many of the stateside installations, caregiver positions are filled by employees who settle in the area as opposed to the military spouses who may be transferring to other installations with military members in three to five years. Though the hiring of local personnel provides greater stability of programs for stateside locations, it also contributes to the lack of experienced staff in overseas locations.

The motivation for military family members to enter the work force on the installation is greatly influenced by the fact both military and civilian workers in the government service sector receive some form of Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) or Post Allowance. For many military families, the COLA received on this installation is equal to or greater than the salary the spouse would be earning if they were working in a stateside location. This additional COLA offers many family members the opportunity to participate in activities, including staying home with young children, which would not in other circumstances be available to them. Many therefore chose not to work or chose only to work on a part time capacity.

The conditions stated which effect the availability for the center to attract and retain experienced personnel significantly contributes to the difficulty in maintaining program

components. Experienced staff member provide services based on their experiences and training. Inexperienced staff members can not be expected to perform to the same standard. Lillian Katz (1984) provides insight into the differences of the behaviors of staff members with regards to common incidents in early childhood programs. The responses of staff members to a variety of incidents are categorized by Katz as professional or non-professional. The common link to the non-professional responses is a focus on what is happening as opposed to what is being learned by the child. The nonprofessional responses therefore include threats, bribery, preaching, providing busy activities and the use of manipulative techniques to produce the adult desired behavior. Professional responses reflect knowledge, evaluation and judgment. Professional responses provide learning opportunities for the child or children involved. Professional responses require both knowledge and application and would therefore be more closely linked to experienced staff members. As the center loses experienced staff members to rotation, the introduction of less experienced staff members does not replace experience lost from leaving staff members.

Lastly, the concept of developmentally appropriate training will be explored. Early childhood programs focus on developmentally appropriate practices for children. Bloom's Taxonomy (Sprinthall, 1987), Carter, Curtis (1994) and Loevinger (Lieberman, et al, 1991) provide discussion of levels of development which relate to learning. These theories, found in Appendix A, can be applied to learning to work with children as teachers and caregivers. The foundation level of each series is similar in that each reflects the absorption of basic knowledge as pertains to the subject matter. These initial levels provide the foundation to more advanced absorption of material and the ability to put knowledge to use in a variety of settings. For

Bloom, this level is called Basic Knowledge. Carter, Curtis depicts the first stage as Silent and Received while Loevinger refers to early stages as Self-protective. The first of the stages seek to provide the ability to selectively and appropriately put information to use in practical situations. These higher levels reflect the ability to analyze situations to select appropriate methods for their resolve. Clearly, developmental levels are reflected in the experience levels of staff members and may contribute to the level of frustration and lack of job satisfaction of staff members. It is questionable if the more advanced stages of caregiver development are ever obtained in a climate where care providers obtain a maximum of three years experience such as the Before and After School program.

Chapter Three

Goals and Objectives

Goal I:

The first goal of this practicum project is to improve the ability of the staff members to plan and implement appropriate activities in a quality environment for a Before and After School Program.

Objective One: After ten weeks of implementation, staff members will be able to correctly identify developmentally appropriate activities for school age children as demonstrated by accurately sorting 20 of 25 (80%) sample activities into the correct category of appropriate or not appropriate.

Objective Two: Staff members will be able to develop and implement activity plans which increase by 50% the amount of time children engage in activities which are developmentally appropriate as demonstrated by a comparison of the daily plan prior to implementation with the daily plan after nine weeks of implementation of the solution strategy.

Objective Three: At the conclusion of the practicum project, staff members will have increased the number of activities available in a reference library to 100 entries.

Goal II:

The second goal of this practicum project is to demonstrate to staff members the significance of appropriate planning to the program.

Objective Four: After nine weeks of implementation of the solution strategy, children will demonstrate an increased level of active participation in activities reflected by a 50% decrease in the occurrence of behavior problems documented, on the worksheet in Appendix B, during two observations of two hours in length compared to similar documentation from observations prior to implementation of the solution.

Objective Five: After discussing data gathered in support of objective four during the last week of implementation, staff members will acknowledge the benefit of planning, evaluation and reflection as illustrated by responses to staff questionnaire found in Appendix C.

Chapter Four

Solution Strategy

Review of Existing Programs, Models and Approaches:

The value of training and continued education of the professionals working with young children is widely discussed providing a variety of possible solution strategies to the practicum problem. Possible solutions are examined for possible implementation based on cost, time, materials required, match to developmental level of staff and potential to achieve the stated goals and objectives. The solution selected must be relatively inexpensive due to budgetary constraints. Due to the remote overseas location, the materials required for the solution strategy must either be readily available or already on hand as procurement through the system can take three to nine months to receive. The solution strategy selected had to be able to provide significant changes in the ten week period of implementation and take place during the program day. The selected solution had to take in to account the limited experience and training of staff members. The possible training solutions will be analyzed utilizing the above stated criteria.

The Military Child Care Act of 1989, brought training to the forefront in military child care settings. The Department of Defense centers began employing specialist in training and curriculum issues to upgrade the quality of care and competency of staff members working with young children in military centers. As a result of the Act, a training program was designed utilizing Caregiver Modules. The topics of the 13 modules are found in Appendix D. The 13 different modules were designed to cover the core competencies of the Child Development

Associate (CDA). The design of the program includes self-assessment leading to self study with selected reading and video material. The module training required staff members to conduct various learning activities with children and conduct observations in their classrooms. A training specialist is employed to provide assistance and or conduct activities which enhance the reading and video materials, monitor progress and evaluate classroom observations.

There is an individual set of 13 modules for each different development level. There is a complete set for Infants, one set for Toddlers and a third set for Preschool. The completion of each individual module is followed by a written test. For 12 of the 13 modules, there is a required observation during which staff members would demonstrate their competence of the material presented in the module. For example, the competency for the Positive Guidance Module requires an observation of the staff member conducting an activity with children during which the staff member must meet the criteria of the module. A staff member completing the module at the Preschool level must display the ability to set appropriate limits, explain reasons for limits and encourage children to develop their own solutions to problems. The trainer conducts the observation to ensure the staff member demonstrated knowledge of the module material while interacting with children. The program is quite comprehensive. The average module takes three to four weeks to complete. The completion of one set of modules is required of any staff member who does not possess a degree in Early Childhood. Continued employment with military centers is contingent upon completion of the 13 modules within 18 to 24 months of employment.

This program can be implemented in the Before and After school program, however, the current objective is to increase the variety of activities and improve the environment in a timely

manner. Each module is specific. It would therefore take several months to increase the activities implemented in the Before and After school program. Prior to implementation of the modules in the Child Development Center, staff members receive orientation training and follow up training within the first six months of employment. The staff members of the Before and After school program have not received the basic orientation, therefore some of the material may not be developmentally appropriate for the program. Additionally the modules currently available through the installation Child Development Center are not directly related to Before and After school programs. The Preschool modules would be more appropriate as a follow up to basic training. The modules could provide more in depth knowledge of child development and caregiver competency. New modules for Before and After school programs though not available through the installation CDS, are currently available through Teaching Strategies in Washington, DC (Korelak, et al, 1995). As previously discussed, purchase of these materials could take three to nine months to receive. This strategy does not meet the current need of the program however, it does provide possibilities for follow up training.

Many centers have turned to local college classes to provide additional training. Cassidy and Buell (1995) collected data with regards to the quality of staff child interactions as it corresponds to the amount of hours staff members have spent in collegiate studies. The conclusion drawn from the data gathered exhibits a correlation between collegiate study and the quality of staff child interactions no matter what the course of study. As a result of the success documented in the Cassidy, Buell study, the use of college classes for the current program should be seriously considered. This approach would however take time to implement. College classes offered on the installation are eight weeks in length. Courses in the field of Early Childhood are

conducted infrequently due to the lack of available instructors and number of interested students. There was only one Early Childhood class being offered during the time of the practicum. The curriculum of the class was specific to Infant and Toddler environments. This would not benefit the staff of the Before and After school program. The cost of tuition and books would also be incurred by either the center or the individual staff member not to mention the commitment of time outside the work day which can be a deterrent for some staff members. This approach does not meet the criteria established at present.

Sharon Kagan and Michelle Neuman (1996) recently published a comparison of three studies which had been conducted to determine the correlation, if any, between quality programs and levels of staff training. The studies include the National Day Care Study (NDCS), the National Child Care Staffing Study (NCCSS) and the Cost of Quality and Child Outcomes Study(CQCO). The studies looked into various levels of training from in-service to college preparation. Of particular interest to this practicum project is the NCCSS study. The staff members of the NCCSS study had participated in 15 hours or more of in-service training. The study found that the staff members with 15 or more hours of training were more sensitive, less harsh, less detached and more likely to provide appropriate caregiving than staff with fewer than 15 hours. The selected strategy should keep the 15 hour target in mind.

A comprehensive approach to staff training is contained in the Creative Curriculum (Dodge, et al, 1990). This curriculum introduces students to six learning centers the authors have identified. This program is widely used in military Child Development Centers as well as the Department of Defense sponsored Sure Start Program overseas. The training program is designed to provide staff and parents with information regarding the skills children develop as

they interact in the various interest centers. The information would provide the opportunity to meet the objective to increase activities and increase the amount of time children engaged in activities. This approach provides a more in depth look at what learning children obtain through each center and therefore may be better suited as a follow up once staff members have established a frame of reference and comfort level with planning and preparing materials for the interest centers. This approach would met the requirement for cost and availability but does not met criteria for achieving the objective in the ten week time frame.

The Preschool Survival Guide (Feldman, 1991) also contains a multitude of information on conducting activities with young children ages four and five. Topics discussed include, classroom management, curriculum themes, environment in addition to discussion on activity areas such as Science, Art, Music and Cooking. The guide also provides information on how staff members can create a positive learning environment through strategic placement of centers. The use of learning centers and activities are supported in various literature already discussed as well as information published by the Department of Education for the State of Hawaii (1972). Sission (1992) discusses the use of learning centers in the Before and After school care environment.

Saifer (1990) supports the benefit of appropriate environment on children's behavior. Further discussion of the importance of the learning environment set up is found in the discussion of workshops presented to staff members discussed by Carter and Curtis (1994). The approach used by Carter and Curtis is to focus on knowledge the students currently possess and construct new knowledge from current knowledge. This approach is very effective with adults.

This method reinforces by example the teacher as a learner and constructive problem thinker and solver.

Another strategy to increase quality of staff training is through the development of a mentor program (Daniel, 1995). In such programs, master teachers assist new teachers. In these programs, less experienced staff members work directly with an experienced mentor staff member who provides on the job assistance and role modeling. Cusimano (1990) uses previous research to support the importance of mentor type programs stating that student teachers are likely to teach like their cooperating teachers even if the approach contradicts what they have learned in college classes. Mentor programs can be valuable however, these programs require a resource currently unavailable to the Youth Center program: experienced staff members to share knowledge and information.

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, it is important that the solution strategy take into account the developmental level of the staff member as it pertains to the concepts at hand. The level of experience and the level of evaluation and reflection of staff members impacts the ability to move on to the next level (Sprinthall, 1994). The developmental approach requires the identification of where the student is in the learning process to appropriately design the course for further learning. Chapter Two documents the inability of the staff to make use of new material introduced into the program. The staff also possesses a minimum level of experience and knowledge. The objective of the solution strategy must take these two elements into account. The solution should assist staff members in moving along the developmental continuums previously discussed and charted in Appendix A. Not only is it necessary to present factual material to provide a more knowledgeable base but also to assist staff members with the

break down, synthesis and analysis of Bloom's Taxonomy (Sprinthall, 1994). As described by Leiberman and Miller as moving from blaming others to accepting multiple solutions exist and becoming problem solvers.

Lieberman and Miller (1990) have identified four key points in conducting successful training for staff members. The first point is practical application and reflection. The training process is set up in the cycle of adaptation, evaluation, reflection continually repeated. Staff members should not only gain experience but also know how to learn and adapt from the experience much like Dewey 's philosophy of experience. The second point is peer supervision and advising. This component provides assistance to staff members in the cycle previously described by experienced peers. The third point is for staff members to take on a more complex role. This point seeks to empower and build confidences in staff members. The last point is a supportive environment. The solution strategy should incorporate these key points.

Selected Strategy

In order to satisfy the required criteria and accomplish the stated goals and objectives, the solution strategy selected for this practicum project includes a combination of the methods and approaches discussed up to this point. The solution consisted of the writer conducting 15 hours of training sessions with staff members (Kagan, et al, 1996). These training sessions are intended to provide basic knowledge of activities, how to conduct various types of activities (Feldman 1990,) and establish a pattern of evaluation and reflection intended to promote further growth (Lieberman, et al, 1991). The staff members will have the opportunity to put information into practice. The writer will function as a peer advisor assisting with activities and evaluation of

activities (Lieberman, et al, 1991). Once staff members have the tools to plan activities, evaluate the environment and make appropriate changes. The changes are intended to establish an environment in which the children will be more engaged in positive activities. The increased level of the interest of the children will decrease the occurrences of the children's more challenging behaviors. The training sessions can be conducted during the program day with resources currently available to the writer. The training sessions were designed to meet the basic experience level of current staff. Thus the staff training session in the practicum solution meet all the desired criteria.

The selected training sessions are intended to provide an opportunity to achieve the stated objectives. The training will include activities to expand five interest centers. Training will focus on putting knowledge of activity centers to work in the classroom area. This will be followed by practice of reflective evaluation skills and how these skills can be used to structure adaptations to the program. These skills will enable staff to continually evaluate and make changes in the program day. These changes should reasonably result in the 50% increase of children's activity level and a decrease in the occurrence of unacceptable behaviors facilitating the desired changes in staff attitude of objective five. The training's will be conducted weekly for an eight week period therefore a significant but not drastic change can be expected.

The plan will provide inexperienced staff members the opportunity to increase basic knowledge of developmentally appropriate activities and through observation develop the desired understanding of activities appropriate for the children they serve. As this may be staff members first discussion of the concept of developmentally appropriate, an 80% success in the sorting of activity samples will demonstrate sufficient mastery. Staff members will be assisted in

maintaining a resource library of ideas from which future activities can be planned. The current library has not been well maintained. The inclusion of materials from the five interest centers presented should increase the number of activities available to over 100 items.

Training sessions will vary with approach. The solution strategy will implement the four key points raised previously by Lieberman and Miller (1991). Some of the training sessions will focus on the presentation and reinforcement of basic knowledge, other sessions will center around role modeling and evaluation and reflection. The solution strategy selected will provide staff members the opportunity to increase the variety of activities made available to the children in a timely and cost effective manner.

In the first week of implementation of the solution strategy baseline data will be collected by the author for comparison to similar data collected in the last week of implementation. The worksheet in Appendix E will be used to record data. The current activity schedule will be evaluated for the percent of time children are scheduled for appropriate activities. Two hour observations will be conducted during the program day. One observation in the morning and one in the afternoon. These observations will be used to determine the percent of the two hours children are actively engaged in activities offered in order to document the success of the second objective. Initial and follow up data to be used to document the success of the fourth objective will also to gathered. The writer will be documenting the number of times children are placed in time out or display behaviors which staff members must address. The writer will also document the techniques used by staff members. During the first week, a log will be established to monitor the progress of the practicum implementation through the ten week period. The log will also document similar data gathered during the fifth week at the midpoint of implementation. The

midpoint data will be used to determine the need for any minor adjustments which may need to be made. In the event a major problem arises which may jeopardize the practicum implementation, a corrective action strategy will be designed and implemented under the guidance of the practicum advisor. Some problems may be expected with the implementation of the selected strategy as a result of school closures or other factors which alter the program day or staff levels. A school closure would result in more children attending the morning session when training's are scheduled to occur. Minor adjustments may need to be made in the actual training schedule. Additional obstacles may be staffing levels and staff attitude toward training. These factors will be monitored for needed adjustments.

During the first training session, the writer will present an overall introduction to staff members regarding training and goals. The first training will focus on characteristics common to children five year of age as presented in the Feldman (1991) text. Staff will discuss their observations based on their experience. Emphasis will be placed on staff members sharpening observation made of children with a focus on children's interest. This step in the project will begin to address what is developmentally appropriate for the children of the program in support of objective one. Staff members will also receive information on developmentally appropriate practices (Bredecamp, 1987).

The introduction to the second training session, facilitated by the writer, will include a Hunter style introductory anticipatory set (Springthall, 1987) relating the physical environment for the activity areas to the setting of a home. The placement and sometimes intentional separation of furniture for the functional purpose and how the set up can create problems or assist in maintaining harmony for those living in the home. Staff will then evaluate the current activity

room environment to determine if changes in the environment might be beneficial. Saifer (1990) provides support of the effect the environment has on children's behavior. Changes will be made as identified. Staff members will also be assisted with evaluating the results of the changes. Changes will be made to promote more positive behaviors in support of objective four and five.

Activity ideas gathered from a variety of sources for Art, Music and Dramatic play will be presented by the writer in the following sessions to promote the achievement of the second and third objectives. Additionally, the writer will assist staff members in conducting a variety of activities with the children. Activities will be presented to the morning group, evaluated and repeated with the afternoon session. Once activities have been conducted, the writer will work with the staff members to evaluate the activity utilizing the format of Appendix F.

Once several activity ideas have been presented, the writer will present the concept of curriculum webbing, illustrated in Appendix G, for ease in planning of activities for various activity centers. Sample webs will be created. It is expected that staff members will be able to easily focus on themes after the discussion of the dramatic play area. Staff members will be able to relate theme ideas to the activities of art and music previously discussed. Staff members will be encouraged to brainstorm possible themes revolving around children's interest. This training will assist in accomplishing objectives two and three.

In further support of the second and third objectives, in the next two sessions, the writer will discuss activities in cooking and science to continue to expand the interest centers offered children. As with the previous session on activities, staff members will conduct activities and the discuss the experience in an evaluation of the activity.

Once activities in the basic interest centers have been presented by the writer, then practiced by the staff, successful activities will be entered into the resource collection for future reference. Theme ideas which were brainstormed will also be included for future reference to increase the available reference material to the desired objective of 100 entries.

The last phase of the solution strategy will consist of collecting final data to document any changes in the programs as a result of the solution training implemented. The schedule will be reviewed for changes which result in children's expected increased participation in the interest centers demonstrating success of objective two. Observations will also be conducted to collect the comparison data required to document the mastery of objective four. To establish the level of understanding of information regarding appropriate activities for children disseminated throughout the training sessions, staff members will be provided a sorting exercise in which they must sort 20 of 25 activities into the accurate category either appropriate or not appropriate. This exercise will show the success of objective one.

Chapter Five

Strategy Employed

Action Taken:

The solution strategy was implemented during a ten week time period using the plan outlined in Appendix E. The need for intervention was solidified by the initial observations. Staff members appeared to be in a mode of constant correction of children's behavior with little regard to the causes of the behavior or the staff members role in producing the behavior. One of the full time staff members had only started with the program two weeks prior to the start of implementation of the training plan. The other staff members were also new to the program but had two or three months experience when the training began. The training plan was followed with only minor alterations which will be addressed later in this chapter. Most adaptations resulted from staff scheduling problems and staff absence. Staff members were eager to attempt to resolve problems. Changes began to occur in children's behavior during the second week after modifications were made to the environment and initial training on developmentally appropriate practices had commenced. More significant changes in children's behavior were apparent after the midpoint of implementation. A positive change in staff members enthusiasm and initiative was also noticed during the course of implementation.

The first steps in the implementation of the solution strategy consisted of meeting with the program director to review the proposed training plan and discuss possible training times. It was intended that training occur during the regular work day hours for the staff. The first

training was scheduled for a time later the first week when all the children of the program were scheduled to be on a field trip at school. This provided a convenient time for all staff members to attend the first session of the training.

Prior to the first training session, observations of children's behavior during the program day were conducted. These observations would establish a base line for measurement of success of the practicum goals and objectives. Two hour observations were conducted in both the morning and afternoon portions of the program. The observation record in Appendix B was employed to organize observations. During the morning observation, two staff members and six children were present. In the two hour time frame, 60 incidents occurred which required staff members to respond. Many of the incidents occurred concurrently. Twenty-five of the incidents involved children in verbal altercations. Five of the incidents involved children physically striking out at each other. Through the majority of the observation time, staff members were attempting to correct children's behavior and enforce rules. This was particularly evident during the first hour as staff spent most of their time asking children to sit still and be quiet while watching television. The initial afternoon observation time can only be described as chaotic. The afternoon group was composed of 21 children. There were two staff members with the children during the first hour of observation. During the second hour of the observation, staff lunch breaks were finished and three staff members supervised the children. During the first half-hour, staff members busied themselves with the housekeeping chores of cleaning the room after lunch time. Children were involved in what seemed to be a totally "free play" with little or no intervention from staff. The observer recorded 80 incidents during the first hour. It is believed several incidents were missed even by the observer however as a result of the

concurrence of incidents. Of the incidents occurring during the first portion of the observation, 25% went undetected or were ignored by staff members. Incidents included children running and chasing each other across the room and over furniture. Ten incidents included children hitting, pushing and kicking other children to the extent that one child was injured. The volume of the activity room was high. Children frequently yelled across the room at other children and staff. Upon completion of the cleaning duties, staff attempted to provide closer attention to the children. During the second hour of the observation, children were engaged in free play outside. With the increase of staff to three and the children's interest in equipment available for outside play, only five incidents occurred during this time. All of the incidents outside centered around children's physical attacks on each other, especially as children engaged in "Ninja play", the acting out of being Ninja warriors.

The day after observations were conducted, an initial training session was presented to staff members. The objectives of the first two hour session were to introduce the practicum project goals and basic strategy, introduce the concept of developmentally appropriate practices (Bredecamp, 1987) and to acquaint the trainer with the staff members. During the first session, staff expressed frustration with children and their behavior. The trainer asked the staff to list the times during the program day that were most stressful to them and the children. The staff agreed that lunch time was exceptionally difficult for them. The trainer interjected some possible causes why this time period was currently stressful. The staff members had stated that children could not keep their hands off other children and other children's food. The staff also stated that the children were easily distracted by the library and writing materials near the lunch tables. The children were bunched together in a small area with one staff member who acted as a sort of

guard dog. The staff member bounced from crisis to crisis. The trainer lead the staff members to think about how the current cramped and crowded eating arrangement as well as the location of nearby objects could easily effect the children's behavior. To this end, the trainer attempted to shift the thinking of the staff from blaming children for the behaviors to looking at possible environmental factors or catalysts effecting the children's behavior. Other problem times such as transition to and from school and problematic areas including the storage area for children's coats and backpacks identified by staff members were also discussed. The first session ended with a fun activity intended to lighten the mood, and possibly give some insight to staff perceptions of children. In a brief word association activity, staff members were asked collectively to develop a list words which describe children in the program using the letters in the word kindergarten. The words selected by the staff found in Appendix H, clearly illustrates the frustration of the staff with children.

The second session began with an activity where the staff members analyzed the layout of a home which had been created by the trainer for a family of six. The home arrangement was set up with specific problem areas in mind. The staff members identified problems they noticed with the floor plan. One example was the location of the infant nursery away from adult areas. The staff identified this would make it difficult to properly care for and provide supervision of the infant child. The staff members discussed what changes they would make which would increase the quality of daily life for the family of this home. This discussion was extended to the current activity area of their program. Staff members identified the problem with the lunch tables. The location of the block area, arts and crafts and library were also identified as potential problems. A symbol for each activity center was placed on a 3 X 5 card. Staff members began

arranging the cards as the would their room. As each arrangement was made, staff discussed the impact of the changes and any additional problems the new arrangement would make. After several arrangements, staff members agreed on a plan. The classroom furniture was then arranged according to their plan. Activity centers and work area for each center became more clearly defined (Dodge, 1987) for both staff and children with the new arrangement. Children were able to work and play in the centers without the distraction and disruptions which previously occurred. Staff members could easily see which children were in which centers and what they were doing. The daily routines involved in lunches and putting away coats were also made easier.

Staff members commented on the positive impact the simple changes had on children's behavior. Staff member began looking at other changes they could make to the program. One staff member located art items in the storage room which she used to enhance the activities available in the art center. After placing materials out, the initial success was dampened when children did not take care of materials to the staff members expectations. Staff members displayed frustration again with children rather than the situation.

Difficulty arose with the scheduling of the next two training sessions due to the availability of staff to attend. Training was provided to the morning staff which afternoon staff was unable to attend. Activities for art and music were planned and conducted with morning staff with success. When activities were implemented in the afternoon, less success was perceived by the staff as being achieved. The morning staff introduced homemade playdough to the morning group of seven children. Children actively explored and were engaged in the activity. When the activity was repeated with the larger afternoon group, staff reported children

having playdough all over the room. The consensus of the staff was that playdough was inappropriate and the children should not have the item. The next day during the afternoon session the trainer worked with five children in an out of the way area with the playdough. Children were positively engaged for approximately 25 minutes. After about 25 minutes, the trainer physically moved to another area of the room. Within ten minutes, children had begun to use playdough as bowling balls and were watching balls of playdough explode against the wall. The trainer returned to the area assisting children with the clean up. Once the playdough was put away, the trainer conducted a discussion with the children of appropriate uses and inappropriate uses of playdough. The trainer later discussed the incident with staff, demonstrating the role direct supervision had with the activity as well as holding children accountable for their actions and assisting children with the concept of appropriate choices.

The next week the plan was to incorporate music activities into the program. The staff had begun to pinpoint problems with the children's scheduled quiet time from 12 noon to 1 PM. It was addressed that all children were not appropriately participating in quiet time activities. Staff stated several children actually napped during the later part of quiet time but also several children only seemed to gain more energy during the quiet time. The trainer provided a tape of quiet music. Staff tried to use the tape to encourage a quiet time atmospheres. Staff stated that children did not respond to the music at all. Staff members quoted children as saying they knew the staff members were trying to make them sleep. The children created a disruption. One staff member changed the tape to a more lively dance music. The children were encouraged to dance and move to the music for 20 minutes. For the last portion of the day's quiet time, children sat

calmly at tables and drew pictures. This experience would lead to future revisions in scheduled quiet time and procedures.

The next week, the opportunity arose for a longer training session. The children of the program were again scheduled to participate in an activity at school for the afternoon. This provided a two and one half hour training time. The session began soon after the children were escorted to school. Staff members were eager to discuss their observations and experience's and were willing to work through the lunch hour. The success of previous interventions had begun to turn their focus from blaming children for their behaviors to finding changes and solutions the staff members could implement. It was also beneficial at this time to get all staff members together. Each staff member had ideas they wanted to implement but also needed the support from other staff members. This training session provided for the sharing of all ideas and well as the presentation of materials selected by the trainer. The director provided pizza and soda for participants in the days training. Staff had specifically requested information on discipline and positive guidance. Though not originally intended to be part of the practicum training, material was provided.

The session would also include a discussion of the results of the quiet time activity and playdough incident. Staff members discussed that perhaps the quiet time was occurring at the wrong time. Quiet time was starting at 12 noon when the afternoon kindergarten children attended school. Staff discussed that quiet time might be starting too early and lasting too long. Staff discussed changing the time and activities during quiet time. The staff was also interested in conducting activities in smaller groups verses the entire group of 25 and sometimes 30 children. Staff members were overwhelmed by the large group and found dividing the group into

smaller units for activities enabled them to provide better supervision and interaction with children. Though this concept could easily have been told to staff members, a greater impact was made by staff experiencing and discussing experiences.

This session provided the opportunity to discuss increasing opportunities in the dramatic play area. The staff brainstormed possible ideas for the dramatic play center. Ideas included creating a grocery store, post office, pet store and Christmas present wrapping area. The trainer introduced the curriculum webbing found in Appendix G to demonstrate the ease of planning activities. Staff members easily brainstormed several webs. Though long, this session was encouraging and provided all staff members the opportunity to discuss many aspects of the program day.

The following week was the mid point of the practicum project training program. As several topic had been covered in the previous week's longer training session, and due to staff absence from illness, the author only conducted observations during this week. The observations were very enlightening. The incidents of children's inappropriate behavior had been drastically reduced. There was a 90% reduction of incidents in the morning session and an 84% reduction in the afternoon session. The afternoon session had a much calmer tone from the time of the previous observation. A difference in the techniques used by staff members was also emerging. As discussed in previous chapters, Katz (1984) identified the differences in the manner in which trained and non trained staff members dealt with children. Staff members were using fewer commands and orders to children. Staff members were beginning to assist children with conflict resolution. The staff members were employing more positive techniques including discussion and explanation. Staff members were conducting conversations with children at the child's level.

Clearer rules were posted on the wall and had previously been discussed with children. Children were reminded of the rules as well as the consequences and impact of their behavior. Staff members did not jump to blame children for behavior problems but were able to begin looking for causes of the behavior. One staff member relayed her experience during an art activity. She had planned an activity for the whole group. The activity started about 25 minutes before lunch. Some of the children quickly joined the activity and completed it, others were slow to join and others took time finishing their projects. When it was time to clean up for lunch, problems resulted as children wanted to continue to finish their projects. In order to transport the afternoon children to school on time, lunch could not be changed. The tables being used needed to be converted into lunch tables. The staff member stated that as the problems began, she realized she had a part in creating the situation by conducting the activity so close to the lunch hour. This was a valuable experience for the staff member to use during future planning. The majority of the behavior difficulties arose during the transition times. The schedule had been altered from Appendix I to a new schedule Appendix J. Schedule changes were used in attempts to prevent problems from developing. Success of staff interventions was evident. A summary detailing the staff's success and program improvements was provided to the director and staff. This turned out to be a very important part of the practicum experience. Though changes were occurring in the program, staff members did not seem to be directly aware of the impact. The statistics provided evidence of the change as well as stimulated thinking on the part of staff members to their success.

The next training topic was cooking. After previous discussions about children preparing snacks and participating in cooking activities, staff had once tried to have children prepare their

own snack of peanut butter and crackers. Children did not perceive this as a positive change. The children complained to the staff they preferred the staff to prepare snack for them. The staff was not enthusiastic about including cooking activities at that point. Many cooking ideas were discussed and provided for the resource book. Staff members however were reluctant to select an idea for implementation. During that week, the trainer brought in the supplies necessary to make a snack treat which resembled mini hamburgers. The trainer took the supplies out a the bag in view of the children. The children began to gather to ask questions curious as to what was happening. Several children turned away from the activity when they learned the group would be preparing a snack, others eagerly joined. As the snack was being prepared, children wandered from other centers to see what was happening. Those children who stayed to assist with preparation enjoyed the activity and prepared the tables for snack with napkins cups and juice. As snack was served, children who had not created the snack asked about the preparation. The children who had prepared the snack enthusiastically explained the process to their friends. Though all children did not participate, staff members saw the enthusiasm the children displayed during the activity and looked for other cooking or preparation activities which the children may enjoy.

Staff expressed a desire to work more on the daily schedule. The next week the afternoon staff came early to work with the morning staff on the schedule. Staff members discussed theme and activity ideas and more firmly established classroom rules for a consistent enforcement from all staff.

During the ninth week, scheduling problems prohibited a training time for the science and discovery activities, however, materials were provided for the resource book. Staff members had

also begun to collect activity ideas from various resources and were eager to implement these activities.

Final observations were conducted to measure the results of the ten week training efforts. During the ten weeks, fourteen hours of training had been provided to staff. A list of reference materials use for training and resources in located in Appendix I. The results confirmed attainment of the desired changes in the program and children's behavior. During the last observation, nine incidents occurred during the morning an 85% decrease. The ten incidents in the PM was an 89% decrease.

Review of Practicum Goals and Achievements:

The selected strategy was successful in achieving the desired goals and objectives. The following provides an outline of the specific accomplishments of each goal.

Goal 1: Staff obtained 80% or better on a the sorting activity demonstrating competence in distinguishing appropriate and inappropriate program components. This met the desired objective.

Goal 2: Changes in schedule resulted in a more appropriate day. Initial schedule provided little opportunity for appropriate activities. Appendix J shows the original program schedule. Changes in the schedule were made over the course of the training time found in Appendix K.

increased by over 50% the time children were engaged in appropriate activities meeting the desired outcome.

Goal 3: This goal was well surpassed. Well over 100 entries complete with reference list of material used was created. Staff members also began to collect ideas for future activities and had planned a framework of themes for the year.

Goal 4: Changes in the number of occurrences of problem behaviors decreased more than the projected outcome.

Goal 5: All staff responses to the questionnaire supports their greater comfort with planning and a greater understanding for the need for planning the program activities. Staff members also indicated a greater satisfaction with their jobs and were enthusiastic about continuing to build the program.

Chapter Six

Conclusions, Recommendations, Future Plans

Conclusions:

The results from the practicum project clearly demonstrate the benefits derived from the staff training conducted. Training assisted the staff with bridging the knowledge and experience they had already gained to expand their knowledge and experience. Sessions provided the opportunity for staff to concretely understand concepts. Staff members did not at first directly see the impact of changes made. When the results of the observations conducted at the mid point of the practicum were shared with staff, the impact was clearer. Sharing results at the mid point provided additional motivation for staff members to try other interventions, techniques and changes.

The training provided in the practicum experience contributed to the overall daily functioning of the program and brought the program more in line with quality programs as defined by NAEYC. Staff members have effected changes to the program planning, daily schedule and techniques of dealing effectively with children. The staff has developed a greater awareness of the benefits of planning and preparation for their program. Through practice, staff members have gained experience with analyzing program components and effecting changes from evaluations. It is important that staff members have learned that there is not always one perfect answer to problematic areas of the program. Many times changes made to the program worked only for a short time leaving staff members to search further for solutions. Through

training, staff members have begun to utilize a variety of resource materials in developing program activities. Staff members expressed greater confidence in their ability to make positive and effective adaptations to their program. Staff members have assumed greater responsibility for conducting activities and providing an appropriate environment for children of the program. From the results of the staff questionnaire, training and experience also appear to be a contributing factor to staff satisfaction with their job. This greater staff satisfaction can result in creating a more stable, reliable and experienced staff for the program at present. Additionally, the current staff will be able to share their training and experience with new staff members. The training of new staff members will be important to maintain the program growth especially if new staff members do not have previous training or experience. Quality training can counter some of the effects of the three steps forward two steps backward program growth pattern which is sometimes seen in military child care programs overseas. The current staff members have created the foundations to a program which should ease the transition for any new staff members. Materials have been maintained and provided for use in orientation of new staff members in the future. Additionally, the training will assist the program staff in meeting the new standards from higher headquarters' expected a few months after the completion of this practicum report

Recommendations:

A variety of training programs need to be provided in order to match the level of the staff members skills with the level of the training. Developmentally appropriate training must be made available to staff members as well as children. Standards must be set then strategic plans designed and implemented to guide and move staff members in the direction of the standard. In

ideal situations, staff members would receive appropriate training prior to working with children. As this is not always an option in overseas or other remote areas. Effective training programs must be designed or currently available programs like those available through Teaching Strategies (Korelak, et al, 1995) implemented to staff members in order to provide quality programs. Training programs could include the establishment of mentor programs (Daniel, 1995). Once staff members have received training and experience, they could serve as mentors for new staff members. Staff assignments pairing more experienced staff members with new staff will continue to support the growth of the program and promote the professional growth in newer staff members. Staff members how have a more varied training background and would benefit from the training modules for Before and After Program Caregivers (Korelak, et al. 1995). This training would provide more in-depth information on the specific topics covered in the practicum training. Staff members would also benefit from training which will assist staff members in evaluating their program using an evaluation tool like the Profile Assessment Scale (Abbott-Shim, 1987) or Accreditation Standards (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991) to guide staff members toward creating a high quality program.

It will be important for the program staff to continue to maintain resources and documentation of program schedules and activity plans. These records will assist newer staff members by providing the program framework and structure with in which staff members can work. Staff schedules can be used to support staff by allocating joint planning time.

A final recommendation for overseas programs is to develop some form of network system for staff members. As noted in Chapter Five, staff members were frustrated with the children and also available supplies. Some of this frustration may stem from their expectations.

As the staff members of the program of the practicum did not have previous experience with children or other programs, it may be helpful for them to discuss problems with peers from other centers. Providing copies of professional literature may also assist staff members to establish appropriate expectations and expand the view of their program through sharing ideas with program staff from other programs.

Future Plans:

Initially, the author intends to share this practicum report with professional colleagues in the overseas arena. Copies of the report will be disseminated to selected colleagues at overseas military installations. Follow up discussion on training programs and mentor programs are planned during the authors visits to other programs planned for the Spring of 1996. The author is interested in receiving professional comments from peers on results as well as gathering information on strategies employed by colleagues in the area of training. Of specific interest to discuss with colleagues is training programs which, like the practicum plan, encourage staff members not only to learn material, but enable them to use the knowledge to analyze situations and selectively chose an appropriate course of action.

More far reaching goals for the author include using the insights and ideas derived from the practicum experience in pursuit of personal career goals in providing technical assistance to current professionals and provide effective training to students interested in the early childhood field as care providers, supervisors, trainers or directors.

Reference List

Abbott-Shim, M. and Sibley, A. (1987). Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs. Abbott-Shim Sibley

Bredecamp, Sue. (1987). Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8. National Association for the Education of Young Children: Washington, DC

Carter, M. and Curtis, D. (1994). Training Teachers A Harvest of Theory and Practice. Redleaf Press: St. Paul, MN

Cassidy, D., Buell, M., Pugh-Hoes, S. and Russell, S. (1995). The Effect of Education on Child Care Teacher's Beliefs and Classroom Quality: Year One Evaluation of the TEACH Early Childhood Associate Degree Scholarship Program. Early Childhood Research Quarterly 10. (2) 171-183

Cusimano, Barbara Ewens. (1990). Training Teachers-A cooperative Effort. Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. 61 (3) 81-84

Daniel, Jerlean. (1995). Quality: The Training Connection. Young Children 50 (5) 2

Darling-Hammond, L. and McLaughlin, M. (1995). Policies that Support Professional Development in an Era of Reform. Phi Delta Kappan, 76 (8) 597-604

Department of Education State of Hawaii. (1972). A Curriculum Guide for Early Childhood Education Ages 3-8. Office of Instruction Services: Hawaii

Dodge, Diane Trister, and Colker, Laura J. (1987). The Creative Curriculum. Teaching Strategies: Washington, DC

Duffy, Gerald G. (1994). Professional Development Schools and the Disempowerment of Teachers and Professors. Phi Delta Kappan 75 (8) 596-600

Feldman, Jean R (1991). A Survival Guide For The Preschool Teacher. The Center For Applied Research in Education: West Nyack, NY

Glascott, Kathleen. (1994). A Problem of Theory for Early Childhood Professionals. Childhood Education 70 (3) 131-132

Harms, Thelma and Clifford, Richard (1980). The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. Teachers College Press: New York, NY

Kagen, S., and Neuman, M. (1996). The Relationship Between Staff Education and Training and Quality in Child Care Programs. Child Care Information Exchange, 107, 65-70.

Katz, Lillian. (July, 1987). The Professional Early Childhood Teacher. Young Children, 39, 3-10

Koralek, D., Newman, R. and Colker, L. (1995). Caring for Children in School Age Programs Volume I and II. Teaching Strategies: Washington, DC

Koralek, D., Colker, L., and Dodge D. (1993). The What, Why, and How of High Quality Early Childhood Education: A Guide for On-Site Supervision. National Association for the Education of Young Children: Washington, DC

Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (1991). Staff Development for Education in the 90's. Teacher's College Press: New York, NY

Lieberman, A. and Miller L. (1995). Practices that Support Teacher Development Transforming Conceptions of Professional Learning. Phi Delta Kappan, 76 (8) 591-596

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (1991). Guide to Accreditation. National Association for the Education of Young Children: Washington, DC

Sisson, Linda G. (1992). Kid's Club A School Age Program Guide for Director's. School Age Notes: Nashville, TN

Sprinthall, N. and Sprinthall, R. (1987). Educational Psychology A Developmental Approach. Random House: New York, NY

Saifer, Steffen. (1990). Practical Solutions to Practically Every Problem; The Early Childhood Teacher's Manual. Redleaf Press: St Paul MN

Tally, Bill. (1995). Developmental Training Understanding the Ways Teachers Learn. Electronic Learning, 14 (8) 14-15

Appendix A

Comparison Chart of Developmental Stages
of Learning

Comparison of Developmental Stages Related to Learning

Stage	**Blooms Taxonomy** (Springthall, 1987)	**Carter/Curtis** (1994)	**Loevinger** (Lieberman, Miller, 1991)
1	**Basic Knowledge** Information, Facts	**Silent** Little awareness; concrete information	**Impulsive** Absolutes; impulsive; blame others
2	**Comprehension** Demonstrates understanding by restating ideas in own words	**Received Knowledge** Faith in authority; buffetted by change	**Self-Protective** Controls impulses; manipulative; self-advantage
3	**Application** Apply knowledge to real situations	**Subjective Knowledge** Value own experience; passionate rejection of others perspective	**Conformist** Group rules; belonging; social acceptance
4	**Analysis** Classify; break down components; understands relationship of components	**Procedural Knowledge** Seeks others points of view; analytical; reflective	**Self Aware** Accepts multiple possiblities; problem solver

5	**Synthesis** Ability to make something new; bring new ideas together for new theories	**Constructed Knowldege** Tolerance for contridiction; compromise; relate personal experiences to theory	**Conscientious** Ability to evaluate self; long term goals; internal rules
6	**Evaluation** Create standard of judgement; weighs, evaluates		**Individual** Greater concept of interpersonal relationships
7			**Autonomus** Inner conflict; acknowledge others need for autonomy
8			**Integrated** Reconcile conflict demands to renounce the unattainable

Appendix B

Sample: Observation Record
of Children's Behavior

Observation Record of Children's Behavior

Date of Observation:_____ Time of Observation:_____

Number of Staff:_____ Number of Children:_____

Number of Incidents Recorded:_____

Children's Activity:

Child not engaged in task:

Aimless Wondering:

Conflict/fighting:

Not following directions:

Not following Rules:

Comments:

Conflict Child's Reaction

Physical Reaction:

Inappropriate verbal:

Appropriate verbal:

Comments:

Conflict Teachers Reaction:

Intentionally Ignoring:

Undetected

Verbal Reminder of Rules

Assistance with child resolving

Time out

Removed from room

Other

Comments:

Total Number of Incidents: _____

Appendix C

Sample: Staff Questionaire

Questionnaire
Master's Practicum 1/96

Please rate the following statements on a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree) by circling the appropriate number for each statement Space is provided for you to comment as necessary.

1. I believe I can impact children's behavior in a positive manner by planning activities in advance.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

2. I believe my reactions to children's behavior has an impact on their behavior.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

3. I believe an understanding of children's abilities is important for program planning.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

4. I believe when behavior difficulties arise, I can analyze the situation and make changes which can alter the child's future behavior.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

5. I believe experience is important to success at my job.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

6. I believe education and training are important for success at my job.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

7. I am more comfortable with my job now than I was during first 2 months of work.

1 2 3 4 5

Comment:

8. Please rate from one(most preferred) to five (least preferred) the following instructional method you prefer when learning.

_____Video _____ Reading _____Lectures _____Discussion

_____Hands on

9. List any training topic you believe would be beneficial to you in your work.

10. What do you believe could assist you in achieving greater success at your job?

Appendix D

Department of the Navy Caregiver
Module Topics

Department of the Navy Caregiver
Module Topics

1. Keeping Children Safe
2. Promoting Good Health and Nutrition
3. Creating and Using an Environment for Learning
4. Promoting Physical Development
5. Promoting Cognitive Development
6. Promoting Communication
7. Promoting Creativity
8. Building Children's Self-Esteem
9. Promoting Social Development
10. Providing Positive Guidance
11. Working With Families
12. Being an Effective Manager
13. Maintaining a Commitment to Professionalism

Appendix E

Ten Week Calendar for Implementation

Ten Week Calendar for Implementation

Week One:

Collect Data:
- Objectives two, three and four:
  - Current Schedule of Activities-Time children engaged
- Objective four:
  - Current behavior problems
  - Two hour observation during morning session, two hour observation afternoon session

Conduct Training:
- Objective One:
  - Introduction to project (TH 15 min)
  - Discuss experiences with 5's (TH 30 min)
  - Observations (TH)
  - About 5's (Feldman, 1991), Developmentally Appropriate (Bredecamp, 1986). (F 50 min)

Discuss next week Training with Director

Week Two:

Conduct Training:
- Objective Two and Four:
  - Environment/Schedule (T 50 min)
  - Observations (W)
  - Discuss Adaptations (TH 50min)

Discuss next week training with Director

Week Three:

Conduct training:
- Objective Two, Three, Four:
  - Activity ideas-ART (T, W, TH)
  - Selection of activities (T 30 min), Plan (W 30 min)
  - Implement (TH am), Evaluate/Reflect (TH pm 30 min)

Discuss next week training with Director

Week Four:

Conduct training
Objective Two, Three and Four:
Activity ideas-MUSIC (T, W, TH)
Selection of activity (T 30 min), Plan (W, 30min)
Implement (TH am), Evlauate/Reflect (TH pm 30 min)

Discuss next week training with Director

Week Five:

Conduct Training
Objective two, three and Four
Activity ideas-DRAMATIC PLAY (T, W, TH)
Selection of activities (T 30 min), Plan (W, 30 min)
Implement (TH am), Evlauate/Reflect (TH pm 30 min)

Gather Mid-point Data (same as week one)

Discuss next week training with Director

Week Six:

Conduct Training:
Objective two, three and four
Brainstorm Themes (T 50 min)
Curriculum Web (W 50 min)
Re-evaluate schedule (TH 50 min)

Discuss next week training with Director

Week Seven:

Conduct training:
Objective two, three and four
Activity Ideas-SCIENCE (T, W, TH)
Activity selection (T 30 min), Plan (w 30 min)
Implement (TH am), Evlauate/Reflection (TH pm 30 min)
Discuss next week training with Director

Week Eight:

Objective two, three and four:

Activity Ideas -COOKING (T, W, TH)
Selection (T 30 min), Plan (W 30 min)
Implement (TH am), Evaluate/Reflect (TH pm 30 min)

Discuss next week training with Director

Week Nine:

Objective two, three and four:

Re-evaluate/Adapt daily schedule and environment (T 50 min)
Assemble Resource book

Discuss next week with Director

Week Ten:

Collect data:

Objective One:

Sorting Activity (T 30 min)

Objective Two, Three and Four:

Observations (same as week one) (W)

Objective five:

Staff Survey(TH) Out Brief with Director

Appendix F

Sample: Activity Evaluation/Reflection Worksheet

Activity Evaluation/Reflection Worksheet

Project:_____ Time:_____

Number of Children: _____ Number of Staff:_____

Unusual circumstances:

Children Involved: Yes No

Comment:

Children Demonstrated Enjoyment: Yes No

Comment:

Children's Comments:

Positive Events:

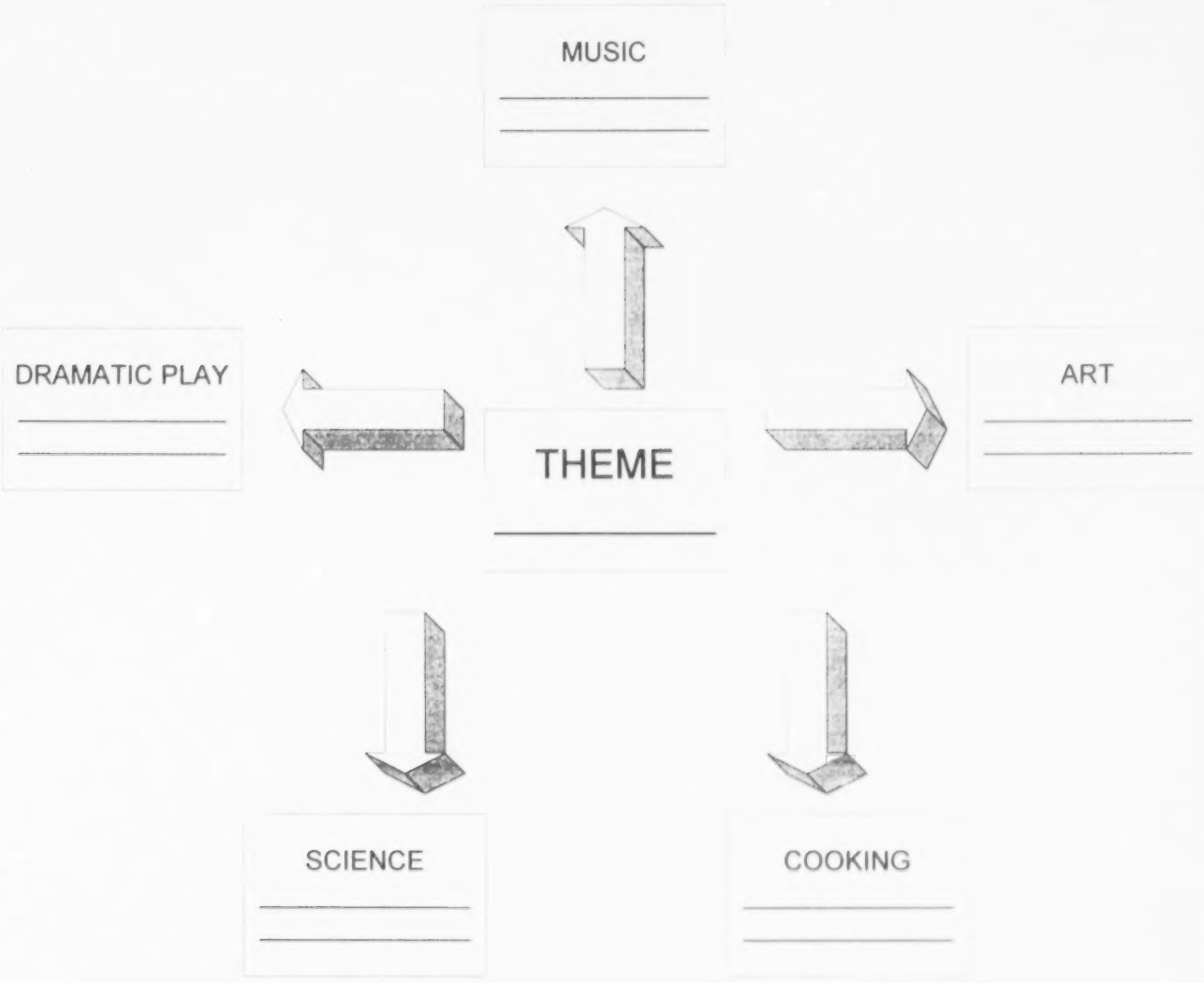
Concerns:

Future Ideas/Changes:

Appendix G

Sample: Curriculum Web

ACTIVITIES



Appendix H

Word Association Activity Results

Word Association Activity Results

K- Kicking

I- Intelligent

N- Noisy

D- Disrespect, Destructive, Daring

E- Excited, Eager

R- Rambunctious

G- Growing

A- Anger, Attention

R- Rowdy

T- Testing

E- Energy

N- No Rules

Appendix I

Reference List for Training and Resources

Additional Reference List
For Training and Resource

Beaty, Janice, J. (1988). Skills for the Preschool Teacher. Merrill Publishing Co.: Columbus, OH

Beckman, C., Simmons, R., and Thomas, N. (1982). Channels to Children: Early Childhood Activity Guide for Holidays and Seasons. Belwin Mills Publishing Corp.: Melville, NY

Frank, Marjori (1976). I Can Make A Rainbow. Incentive Publications Inc.: Nashville, TN

Gork, M. and Pratt, D. (1991). Activities for Before and After School. Incentive Publications Inc.: Nashville, TN

Hibner, D. and Cromwell, L. (1979). Explore and Create. Partner Press: Livonia MI

Jenkins, Karen (1982). Kinder-Krunchies: Healthy snack recipes for Children. Discovery Toys: Martinez, CA

Kohl, Mary Ann (1994). Scribble Art. Bright Ring Publishing: Bellingham, WA

Linderman, C. Emma (1979). Teachables from Trashables. Toy's 'n Things Press: St. Paul, MN

Markel, Sandra (1988). Hands on Science. Instructor Publications Inc.: Cleveland, OH

McDonald, Mary Richard (1991). Before and After School Programs: A Start Up and Administration Manual. School Age Notes: Nashville, TN

Redleaf, Rhonda (1987). Teachables from Trashables II. Toy's 'n Things Press: St. Paul, MN

Sisson, Linda, G. (1992). Kid's Klub: A School-Age Program Guide for Directors. School Age Notes: Nashville, TN

Warren, Jean (1983). Piggy Back Songs. Warren Publishing House: Everett, WA

Williams, R., Rockwell, R., and Sherwood, E., (1987). Mudpies to Magnets: A Preschool Science Curriculum. Gryphon House: Mt. Rainer, MD

Wishik, Cindy (1982). Kids Dish It Up...Sugar Free. Peninsula Publications Inc.: Port Angeles, WA

Appendix J

Initial Program Schedule

Initial Schedule

8:00-9:00	Television
9:00-9:15	Outside Time
9:15-9:45	Snack
9:45-10:20	Centers
10:20-10:35	Pick up children at school
10:35-11:15	Group Art
11:15-11:50	Lunch
11:50-12:00	Escort children to school
12:00-13:00	Quiet time
13:00-13:30	Outside time
13:30-14:15	Centers
14:15-14:40	Pick up children at school
14:40-15:00	Outside time
15:00-15:30	Snack
15:30-17:00	Television

Appendix K

Revised Schedule

REVISED SCHEDULE

8:00-9:00	*CENTERS (DRAMATIC PLAY, LIBRARY, ART, DISCOVERY)
9:00-9:15	OUTSIDE
9:15-9:30	SNACK
9:30-10:00	*ART/CRAFT OR ACTIVITY(MUSIC, COOKING, DISCOVERY)
10:00-10:20	*AM QUIET TIME
10:20	PREPARE TO PICK UP CHILDREN AT SCHOOL
10:30-10:35	PICK UP AM KINDERGARTNERS
10:35-10:40	TAKE ROLE, BREAK INTO 2 GROUPS
10:50	SWITCH ACTIVITY BETWEEN GROUPS
11:15	LUNCH
12:00	PM KINDERGARTEN TO SCHOOL *OUTSIDE OR INSIDE GAME
12:45	VIDEO
1:00	* PM QUITE TIME-- (A) WHAT HAPPENED (B) STORY FROM HOME OR LIBRARY (C) CREATE A STORY (D) SHOW N TELL
1:15-2:15	*CENTERS/ARTS AND CRAFT (20 MIN THEN SWITCH)
2:15	END OF DAY SHARING
2:30	PICK UP PM KINDERGARTEN
2:35	OUTSIDE
3:00	SNACK
3:20	CENTERS